

# **MONTANA CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY CENTER POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

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| <b>Policy Subject: Disposal of Patient Medications and Illegal Substances</b> |  |
| <b>Policy Number: MNP 14</b>  | <b>Standards/Statutes: ARM 37.27.130</b> |
| <b>Effective Date: 01/01/02</b>   | <b>Page 1 of 3</b>                       |

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## **PURPOSE:**

To define the disposition of potentially abusive medication, illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia upon discovery in the possession of a patient.

## **POLICY:**

Illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, and potentially abusive medication are not allowed in the possession of patient while in this facility.

## **PROCEDURE:**

I. As a part of the admission process, the MCDC staff will conduct a thorough search of all the belongings brought in by a new patient, in accordance with facility policy

II. Part of the clothing/belonging search includes removal of all medication from the patient's possession. The admitting nurse assesses each medication and communicates this assessment with the physician on call. Depending on what the medication is and what the physician orders, the medication will be (one of the following):

- A. Placed in locked storage.
- B. Placed in the patient's medication drawer for dispensing while the patient is in the treatment program.
- C. Given to the patient to be dispensed at the bedside.

III. If the medication brought in by the patient is considered addictive, i.e. benzodiazepines, narcotics, certain muscle relaxants, Phenobarbital, the admitting nurse will:

- A. Gather information from the patient concerning the amounts and length of time that the patient has been taking the medication.
- B. Report to the physician on call with the name of the medication, the amounts and last use.

The physician will make a determination whether the medication is to be discontinued, if patient needs a taper, and what medication will be used for a taper.

C. If the medications are being discontinued, explain this to the patient and provide the patient some education about the addictive properties of the medication. Explain what the medical plan, as ordered by the physician, will be.

D. If the medication is being discontinued, place the medication in locked storage and send a communication note to the patient's counselor detailing the name and amount of the medication in locked storage.

IV. The treatment team will make the medication an issue in the patient's treatment plan. The goal will be that the patient will develop an understanding of the addictive properties of the medication, and that the patient will voluntarily dispose of the medication while in treatment. If the patient agrees to dispose of the medication while in treatment, the following steps will be followed:

A. The counselor will notify the nursing staff that the patient wants to dispose of the medication.

B. In the presence of two licensed nurses, the patient will dispose of the medication by appropriate means.

C. On the progress notes, one nurse will document the medication, the amount, and the means in which the medication was disposed of. Both nurses will sign the note.

D. If the patient does not agree during treatment to dispose of the medication, the medication will be returned to the patient at the time of discharge.

E. If the patient brings in an illicit drug or any form of drug paraphernalia, the item will be removed from the patient's possession and disposed of at the time of admission:

F. Inform the patient the item will not be returned.

G. Place the item in a non-retrievable container, such as the sharps container.

H. Document on the progress note what was disposed of and how it was disposed of. The charge nurse and another staff member sign of this note.

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Revisions: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prepared By: Colleen Todorovich, RN    Nursing Supervisor    04-27-01

Name

Title

Date

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_ 05-04-01  
David J. Peshek, Administrator